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Alberta CHECK STOP



FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 1, 1973-OCTOBER 31, 1974

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ALBERTA CHECK STOP PROGRAM

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 1, 1973 — OCTOBER 31, 1974



Prepared by: H. Maxted, Director of Law Enforcement
Solicitor General's Department
Government of Alberta
December 31, 1974

Alberta Government Library
Telus Plaza North Tower Site
15th Floor, 10025 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 2N3
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INTRODUCTION

During the one-year period, November 1, 1973 to October 31, 1974, 344,205 motorists were stopped and checked by police patrols in the Province of Alberta. These were in addition to the many thousands of motorists stopped each day through routine patrol activity. These 344,205 motorists were participating in the Check Stop program.

The purpose of this police activity was to seek out and remove from our streets and highways those motorists whose ability to drive had been impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol. This is the Check Stop program in action. This report is intended to provide an assessment of its achievements and an indication of those areas requiring improvement.

WHAT IS CHECK STOP?

Check Stop is a prevention-oriented program conceived and sponsored by the Government of Alberta. While the prime purpose is to remove the impaired driver from our roads and highways it is also designed to bring to the attention of all Albertans the dangers and consequences involved when drinking and driving are combined. The intent is to change public attitudes toward drinking and driving rather than to obtain convictions.

WHY A CHECK STOP PROGRAM?

In 1970 the World Health Organization reported that in all the advanced countries the greatest loss of life in the 16-25 age category resulted from traffic fatalities. Studies indicated that excessive speed and liquor consumption were the prime causes with alcohol being involved in sixty per cent of the traffic fatalities.

In 1972 the Honourable Merv Leitch, Attorney General for Alberta, discussed the problem of the drinking driver with senior Alberta police officers and expressed the need for a preventive program which would encourage motorists to refrain from driving while under the influence of alcohol. Mr. Leitch recognized that police road checks are normally directed toward equipment and licensing with appropriate police action being taken should liquor offences come to light. Mr. Leitch was however anxious to develop a road check program in which the intent of the police to seek out the impaired driver would be made clear to the travelling public.

Concern existed as to the extent of public acceptance for this positive approach. A general consensus indicated public approval, however research revealed that police road checks for this specific purpose had not been used in Canada or the U.S.A. to any extent. It was agreed that the program would require unqualified public acceptance to be effective. There could be no head-on collision between the rights of the individual and the law.

A public attitude study conducted on behalf of the Government of Alberta during September 1973 showed our citizens to be concerned but largely unaware of the magnitude of the drinking driving problem. The survey indicated a growing demand for increased police action.

Compulsory breath tests, increased penalties and automatic suspensions had not reduced the problems related to the drinking driver. It was the opinion of the Attorney General that the severity of the punishment was not necessarily the best deterrent against the drinking driver. Increasing the probability of the offender being caught could be more effective. It was decided therefore to develop a program that would carry this theme as one of its prime objectives.

Law enforcement in Alberta became the responsibility of the Solicitor General for Alberta in September 1973. On October 5th the Solicitor General, the Honourable Helen Hunley, publicly announced the Check Stop program. It was described as a massive, province-wide education and enforcement campaign aimed at reducing alcohol related traffic deaths. Miss Hunley outlined a two-pronged campaign comprising an immediate intensive information phase to acquaint the driving public with the purpose of the program to be followed by a major crackdown by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police forces which would commence on November 1, 1973.

The overall direction of the Check Stop program has been under the personal supervision of the Solicitor General. The Director of Law Enforcement has served as program coordinator.

HOW DOES CHECK STOP WORK?

Municipal and provincial police forces perform regular patrol activity to detect and remove the impaired driver from our roads. Police departments are aware of their own problem areas and concentrate enforcement activities in this direction. Check Stop is intended to supplement, not to replace this normal police function.

In recognition of the need to retain the normal police patrols, participation in the Check Stop program by any police department is entirely voluntary and frequently depends upon the availability of manpower and equipment. While participation by the smaller municipal police departments is encouraged the prime participants are the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who perform the provincial police function in Alberta, and the larger municipal police departments.

The Government of Alberta has supplied each participating police department with distinctive Check Stop signs and information pamphlets for use only at Check Stop locations. These identify the police activity as being "Check Stop" as opposed to the normal police road checks. Check points are established at random locations where several cars may be stopped at one time without interference with normal traffic flow.

Check Stop locations are changed frequently and seldom operate for more than one hour at any given point. Check Stop locations are seldom established at the known problem areas. These are covered adequately by normal police activity. The ideal Check Stop location is one which will reach a desirable cross section of the motoring public.

It has already been indicated in this report that Check Stop is designed primarily to change attitudes toward drinking and driving habits rather than to obtain convictions. The police are encouraged therefore to adopt a low-key approach, one which will assure cooperation from the motoring public. It is made quite clear to the motorist that the police are looking for impaired drivers and are concerned that the driver of the car ahead or behind may be impaired and therefore dangerous.

In the Province of Alberta all motorists are required by law to carry insurance. Each motorist stopped at a check point is asked to produce the pink card which is indicative of adequate insurance coverage. While many motorists normally resent being stopped by police road checks and asked to produce an operator's license, particularly during the late night hours, there is seldom any objection to a request for proof of insurance coverage. For this reason the police approach at Check Stop locations is to avoid requesting the production of the operator's license unless necessary.

During the production of the pink insurance card and the exchange of a few pleasantries the police are on the watch for indications that the driver's ability has been impaired. Under normal conditions the delay is less than three minutes. Before departing the check point the driver is handed a pamphlet explaining the purpose of the police activity and expressing gratitude to the driver for his cooperation.

When impairment is obvious the driver is arrested and charged with impaired driving under section 234 of the Criminal Code of Canada. Should the police have reasonable grounds for suspecting the driver to be impaired he can be ordered to undergo a breathalyzer test as is required by section 235. If the driver refuses to take the breath test he is then liable to arrest and prosecution under section 235. If the proportion of alcohol in his blood exceeds 80 milligrams in 100 milliliters of blood the driver is charged with an offence under section 236. For convenience extracts from the pertinent sections of the Criminal Code of Canada are quoted hereunder.

Impaired Driving

- “234. (a) for a **first offence**, to a **fine of not more than five hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars** or to **imprisonment for three months** or to both;
- (b) for a second offence, to imprisonment for not more than three months and not less than fourteen days; and
- (c) for each subsequent offence, to imprisonment for not more than one year and not less than three months.”

Refusing to Take Breathalyzer Test

- “235.(2) Every one who, without reasonable excuse, fails or refuses to comply with a demand made to him by a peace officer is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable to a fine of **not less than fifty dollars and not more than one thousand dollars** or to **imprisonment for not more than six months**, or both.”

Over 80 Milligrams Alcohol

- “236. Every one who drives a motor vehicle or has the care or control of a motor vehicle, **whether it is in motion or not**, having consumed alcohol in such a quantity that the proportion thereof in his blood exceeds 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 milliliters of blood, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable to a fine of **not less than fifty dollars and not more than one thousand dollars** or to **imprisonment for not more than six months**, or both.”
- “238.(1) Where an accused is convicted of an offence under section 203, 204 or 219 committed by means of a motor vehicle or of an offence under section 233, 234, 235, 236 or subsection (3) of this section, the court, judge, justice or magistrate, as the case may be, may, **in addition to any other punishment** that may be imposed for that offence, make an order **prohibiting him from driving a motor vehicle in Canada** at all times or at such times and places as may be specified in the order
- (a) during any period that the court, judge, justice or magistrate considers proper, if he is liable to imprisonment for life in respect of that offence, or
- (b) during any period not exceeding three years, if he is not liable to imprisonment for life in respect of that offence.
- (2) Where an order is made pursuant to subsection (1), a copy of the order certified under the hand of the justice or magistrate or under the hand of the judge or the clerk of the court and sealed with the seal, if any, of the court, shall
- (a) where the accused holds a permit or license to drive a motor vehicle, be sent to the registrar of motor vehicles for the province in which the license or permit was issued, or
- (b) where the accused does not hold a permit or license to drive a motor vehicle, be sent to the registrar of motor vehicles for the province in which the accused resides.
- (3) Every one who drives a motor vehicle in Canada while he is disqualified or prohibited from driving a motor vehicle by reason of
- (a) the legal suspension or cancellation, in any province, of his permit or license or of his right to secure a permit or license to drive a motor vehicle in that province, or
- (b) an order made pursuant to subsection (1), is guilty of
- (c) an indictable offence and is liable to **imprisonment for two years**, or
- (d) an offence punishable on summary conviction.

- (3.1) Subsection (3) does not apply to a person who drives a motor vehicle in Canada while he is disqualified or prohibited from driving a motor vehicle by reason of the legal suspension or cancellation, in any province, of his permit or license or of his right to secure a permit or license to drive a motor vehicle in that province, where that suspension or cancellation is inconsistent with an order made with respect to him under subsection (1).
- (4) In proceedings under subsection (3), a certificate setting out with reasonable particularity that a person is disqualified or prohibited from driving a motor vehicle in a province by reason of the suspension or cancellation of his permit or license or of his right to secure a permit or license, purporting to be signed by the registrar of motor vehicles for that province is evidence of the facts alleged therein without proof of the signature or official character of the person by whom it purports to be signed.
- (5) Subsection (4) does not apply in any proceedings unless at least seven days notice in writing is given to the accused that it is intended to tender the certificate in evidence.
- (6) Where an appeal is taken against a conviction for an offence under section 203, 204 or 219 committed by means of a motor vehicle or for an offence under section 233, 234, 235, 236 or subsection (3) of this section, the court being appealed to may direct that any order under subsection (1) prohibiting the appellant from driving a motor vehicle and arising out of the conviction shall be stayed, pending the final disposition of the appeal or until otherwise ordered by that court."

Section 206 of The Highway Traffic Act is also listed as it relates to suspensions made for Criminal Code offences.

- "206.(1) **Where a person is convicted under section 234** of the Criminal Code anywhere in Canada, the convicted person thereupon becomes **disqualified** from holding an operator's license.
- (a) for a **period of six months** from the date of his conviction, or
 - (b) if an order prohibiting him from driving a motor vehicle on the highway in Canada is made as a result of the conviction, for the period driving is prohibited,
- whichever is the longer period, and any operator's license held by the convicted person thereupon becomes suspended for the same period.
- (2) **Where a person is convicted under section 236** of the Criminal Code anywhere in Canada, the convicted person thereupon becomes disqualified from holding an operator's license
- (a) for a **period of six months** from the date of his conviction, or
 - (b) if an order prohibiting him from driving a motor vehicle on the highway in Canada is made as a result of the conviction for the period driving is prohibited,
- whichever is the longer period, and any operator's license held by the convicted person thereupon becomes suspended for the same period.
- (3) Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2), where a person is convicted under section 234 or 236,
- (a) if the convicted person has not, within the preceding five years been convicted of these offences anywhere in Canada, and
 - (b) if the convicted person produces **proof satisfactory to the convicting judge** that he was **not actually driving** the motor vehicle at the time of the offence,
- the judge, in his discretion, may make an order reducing the period of disqualification and suspension provided by subsection (1) or (2), as the case may be, to any period being **not less than three months**.
- (4) Notwithstanding subsection (1) or (2), where a person
- (a) is convicted of these offences, and
 - (b) has, within the preceding five years been convicted of any offence under section 234 or 236 of the Criminal Code anywhere in Canada,

the convicted person thereupon becomes disqualified to hold an operator's license

- (c) for a **period of 12 months** from the date of his conviction, or
- (d) if an order prohibiting him from driving a motor vehicle on a highway in Canada is made as a result of the conviction for the period driving is prohibited,

whichever is the longer period, and any operator's license held by the convicted person thereupon becomes suspended for the same period.

- (5) Notwithstanding anything in this section, where a person
 - (a) is convicted under section 234 or section 236, and
 - (b) has, **at any time within 10 years** of the date of the offence for which such conviction was entered, been convicted on **two previous occasions** of any offences under section 234 or section 236, the convicted person thereupon becomes disqualified from holding an operator's license and any operator's license held by the convicted person becomes **suspended for a period of 36 months** from the date of his conviction.
- (6) Where a person who holds an operator's license is convicted under section 234 or section 236, the convicting judge shall forward the operator's license of that person to the Minister."

When the police suspect that the driver, while not necessarily impaired, has consumed alcohol in such quantity as to affect his physical or mental ability, the driver may be required to forthwith surrender his operator's license to the police for a period of up to 24 hours. The authority for this "on-the-spot" suspension is contained in section 207 of the Alberta Highway Traffic Act. For convenience this section is also quoted hereunder. No charges are laid and the driver can reclaim his operator's license when the 24-hour suspension period has expired. This procedure does serve to remove potentially dangerous drivers from the highways. When the provisions of section 207 are used the police assist the motorist in arranging either for taxi and towing service or in the acquisition of a sober person to assume the driving responsibility.

- "207.(1) Where a peace officer suspects that the driver of a motor vehicle has consumed alcohol or otherwise introduced any alcohol, drug or other substance in such quantity as to affect the driver's physical or mental ability, the peace officer may require the driver to surrender his operator's license to the peace officer.
- (2) The request of a peace officer under subsection (1) ipso facto suspends any operator's license belonging to the driver to whom the request is made and the driver shall forthwith surrender any such license to the peace officer, but the refusal or other failure of the driver to do so does not affect the suspension.
- (3) Where a driver who has been required under subsection (1) to surrender his operator's license is not the holder of an operator's license, the request ipso facto disqualifies the driver from holding an operator's license.
- (4) A suspension or disqualification arising pursuant to this section terminates
 - (a) upon the expiration of 24 hours from the time the suspension or disqualification arose, or
 - (b) upon the driver voluntarily undergoing a test at a place designated by the peace officer, which test indicates that the proportion of alcohol in the driver's blood does not exceed 80 milligrams in 100 milliliters of blood, or
 - (c) upon the production by the driver to the peace officer of a signed certificate of a duly qualified medical practitioner, which certificate states that the driver's blood, as tested by the medical practitioner subsequent to the commencement of the suspension or disqualification, did not contain more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 milliliters of blood,

whichever first occurs, and the peace officer shall thereupon return the driver's license, if any, to the driver.

- (5) This section does not apply to a case where a peace officer decides to lay an information against the driver alleging that the driver has, in contravention of the Criminal Code, committed any offence involving
- (a) the actual driving of or care or control of a motor vehicle by the driver, and
 - (b) the condition of the driver or the amount of alcohol in his blood, as the case may be, resulting from the consumption by him of alcohol."

PARTICIPATING ENFORCEMENT UNITS

The enforcement phase of Check Stop commenced on November 1, 1973. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in their role as provincial police, combined their highway patrol units, rural detachments and municipal police units to form 102 Check Stop patrol units. These are strategically located throughout the province. The RCMP participation and interest in the program has been constant throughout the year under review.

The municipal police departments of Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Camrose were interested participants in the program, especially during its early stages. However there were times during the busy summer season when participation by the larger municipal police departments was limited by the pressure of other police duties and manpower shortage.

The Alberta Police Act requires that any urban municipality having a population in excess of 1,500 must provide for its own police service. All but six of the smaller municipalities in Alberta fulfill this obligation through contract policing provided by the R.C.M.P. The six remaining municipal police departments were invited to participate, however their limited manpower is fully committed to normal police activity and their participation in the Check Stop program has been limited.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION — CHECK STOP

Although participation by municipal and provincial police units is on a voluntary basis each participating department is required to submit a weekly statistical report to the Director of Law Enforcement for the Solicitor General's department from which a recapitulation is compiled and distributed to interested parties including the participating police departments.

A recapitulation of Check Stop activity for the period November 1, 1973 to October 31, 1974 is attached as Appendix "A". 10,739 warnings were issued for a variety of minor but correctable offences. 2,730 motorists failed to produce a pink insurance card. The majority of these were included in the "warning" category when the motorist was able to produce the necessary proof of insurance coverage within a 48-hour period. Those who failed in this respect were charged for an offence under The Highway Traffic Act. There were 8,503 violations for other provincial statutes detected during the Check Stop operations. Many of these were for violations of The Highway Traffic Act or for illegal possession under the Alberta Liquor Control Act.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION — GENERAL

Check Stop is primarily a preventive program. It is difficult therefore to make an objective evaluation of Check Stop through statistical comparisons. It is not possible to determine the number of impaired drivers who have been deterred from operating their vehicles through fear of being detected at a check point. It is not possible to estimate the number of individuals who may have used a taxi to avoid the consequences of impaired driving.

It is important therefore that we give consideration to other available statistical data, particularly that which relates to the normal police activity with respect to drinking driving offences. These are attached as Appendix "B". It is also important to note that there were 1,106,352 motor vehicles registered in Alberta for the period November 1, 1973 to October 31, 1974 as compared with 1,022,820 registrations for the similar period in 1972-73. This is an increase of 83,532 or 8.1% and represents a much greater potential for traffic fatalities. The population of the Province of Alberta was as of January 31, 1974, 1,709,499.

A statistical report received from the Driver Control Section of the Alberta Department of Highways and Transport indicates that there were 55,384 motor vehicle accidents reported in the province from January 1 to December 31, 1973. As a result of these traffic accidents a total of 511 deaths were recorded. It is revealed that in the urban areas there were 1,750 drivers whose ability to drive was impaired by alcohol and a further 3,835 drivers had been drinking. In the rural areas 591 drivers were impaired by alcohol and a further 1,799 drivers had been drinking. In other words 7,975 drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents were either impaired by alcohol or had been drinking.

Attached as Appendix "C" is a portion of the "Annual Report of Motor Vehicle Traffic Accidents for 1973" prepared by the provincial Department of Highways. Appendix "D" indicates the number of driver suspensions recorded for drinking driving offences by the Department of Highways for the period November 1, 1972 to October 31, 1973 and a similar period for 1973-74.

The following information is taken from the Coroner's Report for 1973:

EDMONTON

21 Drivers killed — of these 6 had been drinking	29%
19 Passengers killed — of these 9 had been drinking	47%
18 Pedestrians killed — of these 3 had been drinking	16%
2 Drivers killed were under 21 years of age	

CALGARY

17 Drivers killed — of these 8 had been drinking	46%
9 Passengers killed — of these 2 had been drinking	22%
17 Pedestrians killed — of these 2 had been drinking	12%
1 Driver killed under 21 years of age.	

REST OF PROVINCE

194 Drivers killed — of these 107 had been drinking	56%
155 Passengers killed — of these 44 had been drinking	28%
49 Pedestrians killed — of these 30 had been drinking	61%
35 Drivers killed were under 21 years of age.	

Youngest driver killed — 14 years — blood alcohol content 210 milligrams %.

Oldest driver killed — 73 years — blood alcohol content 290 milligrams %.

There was not a blood alcohol count taken in every instance of death. Had there been, the presence of alcohol might have been reflected much higher in the statistics.

These statistics also fail to show that of the pedestrians killed, how many of the drivers had been drinking.

52% of drivers killed in Alberta during 1973 had been drinking.

HAS CHECK STOP BEEN A SUCCESS?

If success is to be measured by favourable public reaction and cooperation the Check Stop program has been most successful. A survey conducted on behalf of the Government of Alberta in March 1974 indicated that 96% of those interviewed agreed that Check Stop is a good thing for Alberta motorists and 85% believe the program should be continued on a permanent basis. Check Stop is a two-phased program: education and enforcement. Each is of equal importance. An objective evaluation must therefore consider each as a separate but related issue.

(a) Education

The success of the educational phase of the program has been well documented. Much of the credit must go to the Public Affairs Bureau of the Government of Alberta for their efficient direction of the advertising associated with Check Stop. The excellence of its timing and content is largely responsible for the immediate public acceptance of the program objectives. The Check Stop logo is now a familiar and accepted symbol indicating our concern for the problems related to drinking and driving.

In the early stages of the program almost every weekly and daily newspaper in Alberta carried an informative article or editorial comment favourable to Check Stop. This created a greater awareness by the public of the problems and consequences related to desire for knowledge of the program and the drinking driver problems beyond mere curiosity.

Check Stop has received support from the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, the Alberta Safety Council, the Alberta Motor Association, the Alberta Hotel Association, the Canadian Restaurant Association and the Alberta Liquor Commission to name only a few. An insurance claims manager in Edmonton recently referred to Check Stop as being the only bright spot in the claims picture in 1974. We have been pleased to provide information to many high school students involved in debates and other school projects related to Check Stop.

Favourable public reaction and support has created an enthusiasm for the program within the participating police departments. The public have accepted that the program is aimed at their protection. The preventive aspects have been well received and this has improved the public image of the police service. Police officers are quite frank in their approval of the program and its potential for improved police-public relations.

Public cooperation at the Check Stop locations has also been a form of encouragement to the police. 344,205 motorists were checked by the police in Alberta during the twelve months ending October 31, 1974. The Solicitor General did not receive one serious complaint relating to the actions or the attitude of the police officers at Check Stop locations.

Reports submitted by police patrols during the month of December 1973 are a positive indication that the educational phase has been effective. These show that motorists exercised greater caution during the festive season. There was a greater use of taxi cabs to and from Christmas parties. There was a noticeable increase in the number of cars left overnight in hotel parking lots because the driver had over-indulged and taken a taxi to his home. The police encountered many wives, teen-agers or non-drinkers driving a group of drinkers home from Christmas parties. It became a common practise to include a non-drinker in each car group to take care of the driving.

As a further indication of the educational factor and the desirable police-public relationship we note that on New Year's Eve 1973 a taxi service in Jasper, Alberta, working in cooperation with the RCMP local detachment members, provided a free taxi service from 1:00 A.M. to 6:00 A.M. for persons who had over-indulged. On New Year's Eve the Lethbridge Transit System operated a special bus service until 4:00 A.M. to provide transportation to party-goers. The cost for this additional service was borne by contributions from business establishments including one from the local police association. The RCMP members at Edson, Alberta, in co-operation with the Edson Kinsmen and the local radio station, offered a free bus service to keep impaired drivers off the road during the festive season.

As an evaluation of the educational phase it is noted that the massive advertising program associated with Check Stop was concentrated into the first four months of the program. The police and their Check Stop activity has been the principal contact with the public during the last eight months. The continuance of the favourable public support through this period is a further indication of the success of the educational phase of the program and the improved police-public relationship.

(b) Enforcement

The RCMP indicate in their year-end report that Check Stop locations within their jurisdiction uncovered more than 1,800 impaired driving offences including suspensions under section 207 of The Highway Traffic Act. In addition in excess of 3,500 liquor and/or narcotic seizures were made from vehicles at Check Stop locations. From a statistical standpoint this indicates that approximately 5,300 impaired drivers, or those having a potential to become impaired, were detected through Check Stop activity.

It is reasonable to expect that a good portion of the drivers involved in the open liquor or narcotic offences would have become impaired to some degree had they not been detected. Any one or more of the 5,300 impaired or potentially impaired drivers may have eventually caused injury to himself or others because of his impairment. This is however one of the intangibles which in any preventive program must remain unanswered.

Statistics provided by the RCMP after they were involved with Check Stop for a four-month period, November 1, 1973 to February 28, 1974 provide an interesting comparison with those for the same period in 1972-73. The figures relate to both Check Stop and normal patrol activity.

	1973	1974	
Fatal automobile accidents	73	67	10% decrease
Alcohol involved	54.8%	38%	16% decrease
Arrests — impaired driving			
Code sections 234, 235, 236	1623	*2071	

*500 during Check Stop operations.

The RCMP also report that during the first ten months of Check Stop liquor involvement in fatalities dropped to 48% from a high of 60% during the corresponding period in 1973, a reduction of 12%. It is also important to note that while there was an increase of 37.6% in the number of impaired drivers requiring breathalyzer tests in 1973 over a corresponding period in 1972 there was only a 3.2% increase during the first ten months of the Check Stop year over the same period in 1973. It is important to remember that there were 83,532 more vehicles registered in Alberta in 1974 than in the preceding year. We would hope this to be an indication that the enforcement phase of Check Stop is effective, however this too must be regarded as one of the intangibles associated with a preventive police program.

Another area of concern relates to faulty equipment. Faulty headlights, rear lights, brakes, etc. present a major hazard on our highways. During the year under review the RCMP detected approximately 10,000 vehicle equipment offences at Check Stop locations. One percent of all fatalities can be attributed to faulty vehicle equipment.

While we may be justified in assuming that Check Stop has contributed favourably to the enforcement picture we must also face the grim reality that in spite of the effectiveness of the program and the lowered alcohol-fatality ratio, traffic fatalities increased by 5% in 1974. This is 3.5% less than the 8.5% increase recorded in 1973. The 15-25 age group continues to pose a problem in that 50% of drivers involved in traffic

fatalities were impaired at the time of the collision. Apparently the Check Stop message did not effectively reach this age group during the first year.

In recent correspondence directed to the Solicitor General for Alberta the Commanding Officer of RCMP operations in Alberta had this to say in support of the Check Stop Program: "... Check Stop not only fits nicely into our preventive policing program but equally compliments the effort put forth by our Traffic Branch to reduce traffic accidents."

CHECK STOP EVALUATION STUDIES

As a further means for evaluating Check Stop the Alberta Public Affairs Bureau arranged a four-phase research project to assess public attitude in relation to the drinking driver.

Phase I

Phase I was conducted during September 1973 as a pre-campaign study. The following is a summary of the results. Attention is directed specifically to items (5) and (6).

SUMMARY

- (1) Higher socio-economic groups and older age groups tend to be more concerned about the drinking driver problem.
- (2) Heavy drinkers differ in their awareness and concern from other population groupings.
- (3) The public does not know how many people are killed each year in Alberta due to alcohol.
- (4) Half the population have been personally associated with an impaired driving situation.
- (5) Young males are considered to be the worst offenders.
- (6) Younger age groups are more apt to drive while impaired.
- (7) Heavy drinkers tend to feel the police methods are tougher than the average.
- (8) Most Albertans want stricter laws about drinking and driving.
- (9) Most people support more public education about drinking-driving problems and solutions.

Phase II

A similar enquiry was conducted during the month of November 1973 when the advertising program was at its peak and the enforcement phase of Check Stop was underway. Attention is directed to items (5), (8), (9), (12) and (13).

SUMMARY

- (1) In general, the public feeling has changed with reference to the seriousness of the drinking-driver problem; more people feel it to be serious now than in September.
- (2) There has been no change in awareness of what the statistics actually are with reference to deaths due to drinking-drivers.

- (3) Generally, there has been a net increase in the level of satisfaction regarding the education the public is receiving about the drinking-driver problem.
- (4) Those who feel more should be done advocate a more intensified use of media to further educate the public.
- (5) There is a generalized change in feeling that the present police enforcement measures on drinking-drivers have improved the situation.
- (6) There is no change in the feeling about the strictness of the laws with reference to drinking-drivers.
- (7) Between 85 percent and 90 percent of the respondents had received some information on the Check Stop program.
- (8) 90 percent of the respondents indicated a positive reaction to the Check Stop program.
- (9) One in ten of the respondents had been through a Check Stop. There was almost no negative reaction to being stopped.
- (10) Almost 80 percent felt the program would be effective in reducing the deaths due to drinking-drivers.
- (11) Almost half the respondents feel that even more should be done about the drinking-driver problem.
- (12) Half the respondents feel it has changed driving habits and drinking habits in the direction of more caution and less tendency to drink and drive.
- (13) Heavy drinkers differ in their opinions and attitudes from moderate drinkers and non-drinkers. They are generally less concerned about the problem, but much more aware of the Check Stop program than average.

Phase III

Phase III was conducted in March 1974. At this time the advertising had diminished and public awareness of the program was through direct contact with the police. Attention is directed specifically to items 11 to 16.

SUMMARY

- (1) The reasons advanced for the seriousness of the problem have changed — in Phases I and II, the main reason expressed was “statistics” . . . In Phase III, the main reason was “the effects of impairment” on ability to drive.
- (2) There is no substantial change in awareness of what the statistics actually are with reference to deaths due to drinking-drivers between Phases I, II, and III. The public has retained very little of the “hard” statistical data presented in the Check Stop advertising program.
- (3) Almost half the population yet feel that not enough is being done about the drinking-driver problem. There is little change between the Phase II and III results in this respect.
- (4) The more advertising, the more the public is satisfied with the degree of “public education”: the less advertising, the less the feeling of satisfaction.
- (5) The public advocates the use of more media for “public education”, and also stresses “educate the youth”.
- (6) The **perception** of feeling informed appears to be more important than the public actually becoming more informed in terms of “hard” data.
- (7) There is no substantial change from the Phase I and II results with respect to present enforcement measures and strictness of drinking-driver laws. The public continues to endorse more enforcement and stricter laws.
- (8) All but a very small percentage were at least somewhat familiar with the Check Stop program.

- (9) 66 percent felt that Check Stop should be advertised more. Most people still feel the program is in effect.
- (10) Check Stop advertising has had considerable carry-over effect . . . 62 percent had not seen an ad recently (34% claimed they had) yet most people could still recall the program.
- (11) Advertising which encourages people to take taxis and informs people that Check Stops are out is felt to be more effective than advertising which emphasizes statistics or encourages people to drink at home.
- (12) 17 percent of those interviewed had been through a Check Stop. There is very little negative reaction to being stopped.
- (13) Over nine in ten respondents had a generally positive reaction to the program.
- (14) The effectiveness of the program is not rated as high as the idea — 62 percent felt it was effective; the main reason suggested was that it causes people to think twice and be more cautious.
- (15) There is an increase in the number who feel that more should be done, and a strong support for the continuation of the program on a year-round basis as opposed to just holidays (85%).
- (16) 96 percent agree that the Check Stop program is a good thing for Alberta drivers.

Phase IV

Phase IV is an examination of the attitudes and opinions of target groups involved with the drinking drivers and includes interviews with police officers, liquor outlet personnel, taxi drivers and the drinking consumer. This study was carried out in May, 1974 when the enforcement phase of Check Stop had been effective for six months.

The specific objectives of the Drinking Driving Target Group project were as follows:

- 1. To measure the effectiveness of the Check Stop campaign from the point of view of the enforcement agencies, and the consumer.
- 2. To evaluate the impact and significance of the Check Stop advertising campaign.
- 3. To determine toward which target group or groups the Check Stop advertising should be directed.

Attention is directed specifically to items (2) and (3).

SUMMARY

- (1) There appears to be an unfulfilled need by the drinking public to have some objective measure of their degree of impairment that they can relate to their inability to drive safely.
- (2) There was a more pronounced tendency to consider drinking and driving a behavior practised by all segments of society rather than just the blue collar worker under 30 years of age.
- (3) No single message was suggested which was uniformly perceived by most as having the greatest impact. However, many acknowledged that messages exposing the financial cost, inconvenience, and heartbreak resulting from impaired driving would be effective. Shock commercials and statistics were generally judged to have transitory effects.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR CHECK STOP?

The Government of Alberta has approved the continuation of Check Stop as a permanent aid to our law enforcement program. The 1973-74 results are being studied and the new and improved Check Stop program should be announced early in 1975. The basic formula has been well received by the public. Radical changes are not anticipated. We can however, benefit from the experience of the past year, particularly in the areas indicated by the four-phase research project.

The Check Stop program has been effective in reaching the social drinking drivers. We must now concentrate efforts on the problem drinker and the young drinking driver. Statistics and reality support the view that young males in the 17-25 age group are the worst offenders and are more apt to drive while impaired. In 1973, 50% of drivers in the 17-25 age group involved in fatal traffic accidents in Alberta were impaired at the time of the collision. We can direct the educational phase of Check Stop to this age group by carrying the Check Stop message into the schools, colleges and universities.

Delegates to the 6th International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety in Toronto in September 1974 were told by a representative from the Canadian Ministry of Transport that we in Canada are too tolerant of the drinking driver, that our legislation governing compulsory breathalyzer tests hinders police in that the police officer must have reasonable and probable grounds that the driver is intoxicated before invoking the demand for a breath test. It was advocated that the police be empowered to conduct on-the-spot roadside breath tests of drivers suspected of drinking, those who drive erratically or are involved in a traffic accident.

Effective roadside breath tests would undoubtedly remove many more drinking drivers from our roads and highways, however there is yet to be developed a portable type breath machine acceptable in Canadian Courts. A machine with excellent possibilities is presently undergoing tests and when available we should support its use at roadside checks.

We might also encourage a greater use of the suspension provisions provided by section 207 of The Highway Traffic Act in borderline cases. This provides an excellent means for removing the potentially dangerous driver from the roads without the need for criminal action in our Courts.

The potential of Check Stop as an effective weapon to combat the drinking driver is unlimited. The success of the project requires the understanding and cooperation of the public. Check Stop provides a means whereby law enforcement agencies and the public can work together to control a common problem.

APPENDIX A
STATISTICAL INFORMATION — CHECK STOP
November 1, 1973 — October 31, 1974

	Calgary	Edmonton	Leth.	Med. Hat	Camrose	*Others	RCMP	Total
Check Point Locations	158	105	116	78	51	38	12,158	12,704
Vehicles Checked	15,173	12,815	16,004	2,737	1,397	1,813	294,266	344,205
Section 234 (Impaired)	14	14	52	3	1	4	131	219
Section 235 (Breathalyzer Refusal)	5	1	14	0	1	3	88	112
Section 236 (Over 80 MGS Alcohol)	45	8	42	3	3	9	979	1,089
Section 238 (Driver Under Suspension)	5	4	7	0	0	0	68	84
Other Offences Criminal Code	5	5	0	0	10	0	141	161
Section 207 (H. T. Act Suspensions)	71	11	512	2	0	11	652	1,259
Warnings	55	427	175	316	80	42	9,644	10,739
Failure to Produce Pink Card	127	194	52	166	61	35	2,095	2,730
Violations Other Statutes	381	48	742	25	41	5	7,261	8,503

* Police Department Not Specified.

APPENDIX B STATISTICAL INFORMATION — NORMAL POLICE ACTIVITY

1973 Period November 1, 1972 — October 31, 1973

1974 Period November 1, 1973 — October 31, 1974

Detail	Year	RCMP	Calgary	Edmonton	Leth.	Med. Hat	Camrose
Traffic Accidents	1973	18,962	15,461	22,114	2,694	1,656	341
Traffic Accidents	1974	22,662	19,030	26,218	3,129	1,789	415
Traffic Fatalities	1973	416	42	54	0	5	1
Traffic Fatalities	1974	432	58	48	1	4	0
Traffic Fatalities Involving Liquor	1973	164	17	N/A	0	0	1
	1974	170	29	N/A	0	0	0
Convictions — Criminal Code 27 Sections 234, 235 and 236							
Normal Police Activity	1973	7,175	1,978	N/A	N/A	147	N/A
Normal Police Activity	1974	6,927	3,114	N/A	N/A	181	162
Check Stop	1974	1,198	52	23	108	6	5
Suspensions — Sec. 207 H. T. Act							
Normal Police Activity	1973	N/A	1,816	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Normal Police Activity	1974	94	2,872	4	N/A	5	2
Check Stop	1974	652	63	11	512	2	0
Breathalyzer Tests	1973	6,186	1,255	1,476	232	183	139
Breathalyzer Tests	1974	6,564	1,909	1,406	233	240	176

N/A — Not Available

APPENDIX C

NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS

Fatal and Non-Fatal Injury Accident by Pedestrian Action:

Crossing at intersection:

- with signal
- against signal
- no signal
- diagonally

Crossing between street intersections

Standing in safety zone

Standing on sidewalk

Getting on or off another vehicle

Children playing on roadway

At work in roadway

Riding or hitching on vehicle

Walking on rural highway or bridge

Coming from behind - parked vehicle or object

- moving vehicle or object

Crossing highway

Not stated

Total

Fatal and Non-Fatal Injury Accident by Condition of Pedestrian:

Apparently normal

Extreme fatigue

Physical defect - eyesight

- hearing

- other

Confused by traffic

Ability impaired - by drink

- other

Had been drinking

Not stated

Total

Fatal	Non-fatal injury	TOTAL
1	98	99
9	42	51
6	163	169
	13	13
7	150	157
1	7	8
7	23	30
2	15	17
1	37	38
2	14	16
	5	5
	13	13
7	69	76
15	57	72
22	175	197
80	881	961
23	416	439
	2	2
	4	4
1	2	3
1	4	5
	9	9
5	29	34
	3	3
11	48	59
39	364	403
80	881	961

CLASS OF VICTIM

TOTAL

	0 - 4 years
5-14	"
15-19	"
20-24	"
25-34	"
35-44	"
45-54	"
55-64	"
65 and over	
Not stated	

TTC

Injured -	0 - 4 years
5 - 14 "	"
15 - 19 "	"
20 - 24 "	"
25 - 34 "	"
35 - 44 "	"
45 - 54 "	"
55 - 64 "	"
65 and over	
Not stated	

14584

By Sex:

Killed -	
Male	
Female	
Not stated	

Injured -	
Male	
Female	
Not stated	
Total	

APPENDIX C cont.

NUMBER OF VICTIMS – Continued

Killed and In-
jured by Month
of Occurrence:

	Killed	Injured	TOTAL
January	27	771	798
February	24	802	826
March	33	1083	1116
April	49	1163	1212
May	56	1205	1261
June	46	1373	1419
July	57	1531	1588
August	40	1566	1606
September	59	1401	1460
October	44	1348	1392
November	32	1077	1109
December	44	1057	1101
Not Stated		5	5
Total	511	14832	14893
Killed and Injured by Place of Occurrence:			
Urban –			
Metropolitan roads and streets	111	7224	7335
Urban areas (10,000 population and over)	19	784	803
Other urban (1,000 to 9,999 population)	5	179	184
Total	135	8187	8322
Rural –			
Primary highways	249	3584	3833
Secondary highways	28	815	843
Local and other roads	99	1796	1895
Total	376	6195	6571
GRAND TOTAL (Urban + Rural)	511	14382	14893

Please list below any explanations or remarks regarding the statistics reported. Additional space for this purpose is provided on page 14.

APPENDIX C cont.

By Age Groups and Type of Accident:

Killed -

Pedestrian
 Other motor vehicle
 Horse-drawn vehicle
 Railroad train
 Street car/trolley coach
 Bicycle
 Motorcycle
 Other vehicles
 Animal
 Fixed object
 Non-collision
 Miscellaneous
 Total

Injured -

Pedestrian
 Other motor vehicle
 Horse-drawn vehicle
 Railroad train
 Street car/trolley coach
 Bicycle
 Motorcycle
 Other vehicles
 Animal
 Fixed object
 Non-collision
 Miscellaneous
 Total

By Age Groups and Sex:

Killed -

Male
 Female
 Not stated
 Total

Injured -

Male
 Female
 Not stated
 Total

NUMBER OF VICTIMS - Continued

YEARS												
0-4	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Not stated	TOTAL		
9	10	9	4	10	6	6	4	14			72	
5	12	42	28	27	26	27	32	21	2		222	
2		9	4	5			3	2			25	
1	5	1		1							8	
		8	4	1							13	
		2	2	1		2	1	2			10	
	4	13	10	2	5	1	2	2			39	
1	6	26	18	22	7	9	6	4	3		102	
1	3	3	6	6	1						20	
19	40	113	76	75	45	45	48	45	5		511	
70	261	113	79	61	44	59	38	73	40		838	
253	535	1643	1434	1370	833	771	530	352	253		7974	
	1	5	1	1	1						9	
3	5	21	8	11	10	7	8	10			83	
	1	2	2	9			2	1			17	
6	152	61	26	14	2	4	1		5		271	
	28	185	118	31	4	2		3	9		380	
4	36	51	35	33	26	17	14	9	9		234	
1	9	34	15	14	8	8	3	2	2		96	
18	33	489	306	220	105	66	37	22	40		1336	
45	146	924	604	439	181	132	57	40	90		2658	
15	62	124	81	74	49	33	24	10	14		486	
415	1269	3652	2709	2277	1263	1099	714	522	462		14382	
12	20	79	62	62	33	27	32	36	3		366	
6	20	32	14	13	12	18	16	9	1		141	
1		2							1		4	
19	40	113	76	75	45	45	48	45	5		511	
243	730	2395	1827	1381	737	606	373	270	264		8826	
171	534	1252	882	890	524	492	338	252	186		5521	
1	5	5		6	2	1	3		12		35	
415	1269	3652	2709	2277	1263	1099	714	522	462		14382	

NUMBER OF DRIVERS

By Condition of Driver:

	NATURE OF ACCIDENT			
	Fatal	Non-fatal injury	Property damage only	TOTAL
Urban -				
Apparently normal	77	7803	50081	57961
Extreme fatigue	2	35	98	135
Physical defect - eyesight	2	15	73	90
- hearing		2	30	32
- other		24	105	129
Confused by traffic		28	149	177
Ability impaired - by drink	14	390	1346	1750
- other		17	81	98
Had been drinking	30	937	2868	3835
Not stated	55	969	12807	13831
Total	180	10220	67638	78038
Rural -				
Apparently normal	214	3614	11763	15591
Extreme fatigue	3	158	235	396
Physical defect - eyesight		6	15	21
- hearing			11	11
- other	1	12	21	34
Confused by traffic		12	26	38
Ability impaired - by drink	27	240	324	591
- other		7	12	19
Had been drinking	73	736	990	1799
Not stated	132	497	2146	2775
Total	450	5282	15543	21275
GRAND TOTAL (Urban + Rural)	630	15502	83181	99313

APPENDIX C cont.

NUMBER OF DRIVERS – Concluded

	NATURE OF ACCIDENT			
	Fatal	Non-fatal injury	Property damage only	TOTAL
By Driver Action:				
No improper driving	208	6334	34557	41099
Drove off roadway	64	1023	2304	3391
Did not have right-of-way	57	2155	9866	12078
Following too closely		394	3023	3417
On wrong side of road	44	290	1028	1362
Failed to signal		31	179	210
Through street – did not stop	4	188	523	715
Speed too fast for road or traffic condition	41	735	2817	3593
Hit and run – apprehended	7	81	924	1012
– not apprehended	5	70	1210	1285
Inattentive driving	41	1437	5569	7047
Cutting in		69	853	922
Car ran away				
Improper passing – on curve or hill	2	13	52	67
– on wrong side	1	24	108	133
– at intersection	3	51	259	313
Improper turn	3	100	692	795
Improperly parked	4	53	219	276
Not stated	146	2454	18998	21598
Total	630	15502	83181	99313
By Driving Experience:				
Under 3 months	9	392	1376	1777
3 to 6 months	6	363	1640	2009
6 to 12 months	12	528	2450	2990
1 to 4 years	141	3356	15965	19462
5 to 9 years	95	2887	14904	17886
10 years and over	288	6840	38259	45387
Not stated	79	1136	8587	9802
Total	630	15502	83181	99313
By Age Groups:				
Under 16 (driving illegally)	8	208	296	512
16-19 years	119	3064	13557	16740
20-24 "	121	3248	16022	19391
25-34 "	136	3291	18525	21952
35-44 "	79	2074	11619	13772
45-54 "	60	1502	8523	10085
55-64 "	46	887	4695	5628
65 and over	29	485	2371	2885
Not stated	32	743	7573	8348
Total	630	15502	83181	99313
By Sex of Driver:				
Male	534	12111	61562	74207
Female	64	2697	14258	17019
Not stated	32	694	7361	8087
Total	630	15502	83181	99313

APPENDIX D

SUSPENSION COMPARISONS

	1972-73 3 MONTH	1973-74 3 MONTH	1972-73 6 MONTH	1973-74 6 MONTH	1972-73 12 MONTH	1973-74 12 MONTH	1972-73 36 MONTH	1973-74 36 MONTH
NOVEMBER	6	2	451	309	167	115	54	56
DECEMBER	7	4	357	257	119	83	69	61
JANUARY	0	13	396	514	149	147	62	81
FEBRUARY	15	32	292	629	118	174	54	77
MARCH	7	31	322	561	99	118	45	63
APRIL	9	20	236	592	90	167	34	91
MAY	13	30	322	728	131	195	47	109
JUNE	1	36	324	613	113	161	49	72
JULY	4	6	293	243	87	52	56	25
AUGUST	0	16	317	505	112	132	44	54
SEPTEMBER	0	28	273	650	103	182	56	78
OCTOBER	2	15	322	672	108	177	42	89
	64	233	3905	6273	1396	1703	612	856

GRAND TOTAL (1972-73) — 5977

GRAND TOTAL (1973-74) — 9065

Increase 1973 - 74 over 1972 - 73 — 3088 or 51.6%.

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1973-74
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Alberta. Solicitor General.
Law Enforcement.
Check stop program. Annual
report.

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